

Wednesday Night Poker

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> Disclaimers: The Remington Steele, Forever Knight, & _Moonlighting_ characters do not belong to me. And though I could not do as much damage to them as their rightful owners often did, no harm is intended by this piece of fiction -- so don't sue me unless you want to end up with my student loan debts.

Â Â Â Â Â "Ante up." They all quickly tossed in their chips.

Â Â Â Â Â "Whose deal?"

Â Â Â Â Â "Mine."

Â Â Â Â Â "Guys, after what happened last time, do we really trust a Blond to deal?"

Â Â Â Â Â "Excuse me?"

Â Â Â Â Â "Hey! I resemble that remark."

Â Â Â Â Â "Where's the beer?"

Â Â Â Â Â "How can you drink that?"

Â Â Â Â Â "I'm not making you drink it. Besides, you drink blood for godsake."

Â Â Â Â Â "Yeah, well I am human, and I don't know how you drink that stuff either."

Â Â Â Â Â "Come on. Did we really come all this way to argue about drinks?"

Â Â Â Â Â "Deal."

Â Â Â Â Â "Alright." The dealer slid the cards across the felt to all six players.

Â Â Â Â Â "Pass. Chips, please."

Â Â Â Â Â "'Pass' or 'Pass the chips'?"

Â Â Â Â Â "Both."

Â Â Â Â Â "OK, I'm in for two."

Â Â Â Â Â "Hey, so how's married life been treating you?"

Â Â Â Â Â "Oh, not bad," Laura leaned back in her chair examining her cards.

Â Â Â Â Â "That hardly sounds like a ringing endorsement for the Holy State of Matrimony," Maddie said.

Â Â Â Â Â Janette added two chips to the pile in the center of the table, "Maddie, since you were married for all of five minutes I would have thought that you had formed very definite opinions about the State of Matrimony; 'Holy' or otherwise."

Â Â Â Â Â "Are you kidding?" Terri smiled sliding her chips toward the growing pile. "The writer's kept changing her mind so much for her, I'm surprised she even remembers what her name is, much less how she felt about anything."

Â Â Â Â Â "Damn, I really hate it when they do that," Natalie said.

Â Â Â Â Â "Well, even though I can sympathize with the two of you, at least be grateful that you're both the Queen Bee on your show." Felicia grimaced. "Some of us are relegated to a few scattered guest appearances."

Â Â Â Â Â "And even those of us who are around most of the time are not always much better off," Janette added.

Â Â Â Â Â Natalie looked up. "Yeah, but at least there is no doubt that you made it off the show alive."

Â Â Â Â Â "No doubt?" Janette smirked, "Really, Natalie, you do know better than that."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Alright," Nat conceded. "But that was a very small minority, and that belief didn't last long. Hell, there are more than just a few people out there who are convinced I am dead. And some of them relish the thought."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Oh, I suppose the dealer takes four," Felicia groaned.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Laura frowned at her cards. "Give me three." And then back to Natalie she said, "Or at the very least you are 'Undead.'"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "There are worse things," Janette said defensively. "Hold."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Absolutely," Maddie agreed, holding up two fingers toward Felicia. "Your writers could turn you into an uncompromising bitch." She added her new cards to her hand. "That is, of course, after they spend a year completely destroying the integrity of your character."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I don't know," Natalie said. "There were more than a few people who thought I have been a bitch over the last year. Hell, some people think I've been a bitch since the beginning of second season."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I think that's part of the downside of being 'The Leading Lady,'" Laura sighed. "I mean, how many times have I have to play the heavy while my husband gets to have all the fun?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Oh, do I know that one well." Maddie threw her cards on the table. "I fold. Do you have any idea how exasperating it gets being the bitch all the time? Not only do I have to be the mature, boring and grouchy one, but I also end up ripping David's heart out and grinding it into the dirt."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Terri snickered, "Not that you didn't get a definite satisfaction out of that."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Maddie grinned, "After two years of taking his crap, you bet your ass! But I still didn't like always having to be the bad guy. Especially since he always gets to be the good guy."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Well," Felicia started. "That's what happens. All three of our shows are run by men, you know."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "And Hollywood does cater to a male audience," Janette added, studying her cards intently.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Great," Nat snorted. "So there's no hope for us at all. Ever."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Depressing thought, isn't it?" Laura dropped her cards. "I'm out."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Well, I still say that you three are better off than most."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Easy for you to say, Felicia." Laura stood up and reached across the table for the pretzels. "You, and Terri and Janette get to be the sympathetic, understanding ones. You're the ones they run to. You guys, well, not Terri, but Janette and Felicia, you guys are the ones who get to have a great, fun, adventurous past with them."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "_And_ you're not relegated to 'six' years of celibacy," Nat grimaced.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Well, Nat," Maddie said. "I don't really qualify on that front either."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Janette reached over to refill her wine glass, "No, but instead you get two lovers in one season, which was the beginning of the end of the show. You got pregnant; you didn't know who the father was; they sent you home to Mommy and Daddy; they turned you into a completely inconsiderate, self-absorbed shrew. First they turn you into a hedonistic slut, and then an unfeeling bitch." She took a sip. "Frankly, I think celibacy might be preferable."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Excellent point." Maddie stood up. "Anybody hungry?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Starved." Laura said, "Pizza?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Sounds good." Terri looked around to see who was still in the game. "I bet five."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Ouch," Nat winced. "Count me out."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Me too." Felicia tossed her cards on the table.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Just you and me, Janette." Terri smiled.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I'll see your five and raise you ten," Janette said.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Maddie picked up the cordless phone. "What do you guys want on the pizza?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Laura looked at Janette and grinned. "Extra garlic."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "You are such a comedienne, Mrs. Steele." Janette wrinkled her nose in disgust. "Anybody who orders garlic is going to find herself hypnotized into clucking like a chicken anytime anyone mentions her name."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I call," Terri tossed in the extra chips.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Three of a kind," Janette said triumphantly as she flashed her set of Jacks.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Terri grinned, "Full house. Five's over two's."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Merde." Janette leaned back, "You are improving very nicely, Doctor."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Thank you," Terri said as she scooped up her winnings.
"It's not easy bluffing someone who can hear your
heartbeat."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Laura crossed her arms and smiled wistfully. "Can you guys
imagine what it would be like if the _guys_ had to be the responsible
ones for once?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Nat chuckled, "I might actually be given a life for
once."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I'd get to go out, have fun," Maddie said walking back to
her seat as she hung up the phone. "Pizza'll be here in about 25
minutes."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I'd get to quote movies and be a cat burglar and a jewel
thief," Laura sighed.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I could get in bar fights and wake up in strange beds,"
Maddie said, trying not to laugh.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I could hang out at the Raven without be ushered into the
back room," Natalie shot a pointed glance at Janette.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Well, don't blame me, Doctor," Janette said defensively.
"That was for Nichola."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Exactly. Imagine if _he_ had to stay in all night
dissecting bodies."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Or what if David had to worry about clients and paying
the employees?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Or Remington worrying about the nuts and bolts of a
case." Laura smiled dreamily, "What if _I_ started getting all of the
attention all of a sudden?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "What if _I_ went on a five day weekend every Monday
morning? What would David do then?" Maddie took a sip of her
beer.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "What if I wandered off after every good looking guy who
caught my eye?" Natalie asked.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "What if you three shut up, already?" Terri shook her
head.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Eloquently stated, Dr. Noelles." Janette stood and walked
to the refrigerator. "I think you are all forgetting, that _I_ was
taken out of the show in the last season. And then, they had the
audacity to make me _mortal_."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Felicia quipped, "Ah, yes, all you needed was the love of
a good man, right my dear?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Let's not forget the child," Natalie
deadpanned.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Janette sneered, "Apparently."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Quite right," Felicia continued. "And I never had more than a half dozen episodes. Total."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Well," Terri sat up. "That's about three more than I had."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Great," Laura huffed. "But all three of you were used to make the guys look more sympathetic."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Absolutely," Maddie concurred. "Terri, you were brought in as David's Lamaze partner. The entire storyline was used to show how sweet and wonderful David is; while I, on the other hand, was painted as a selfish, manipulative, man-hating bitch."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Terri half shrugged in agreement.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "And, Felicia," Laura started. "What about you? You used him, blackmailed him, snitched on him, and then tried to seduce him. And his rejection of you was supposed to make him appear noble and endear him to the audience because that meant he was "staying true" to me."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Natalie smiled, "And what about Nick, Janette? How often has he used you? Hhmm?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I don't even want to count the times, Doctor. Though, I would say, about as often as he uses you."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Touche." Natalie nodded in agreement.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Janette shifted in her seat, "But, very well, ladies, point taken."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ The conversation was interrupted by the doorbell.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Oh good," Maddie stood up, "Pizza's here."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I'll get the money." Felicia offered.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "And I got the tip." Natalie reached for her purse.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "And I get the delivery boy," Janette smiled.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "You always get the delivery boy," Laura complained.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I only want a sip," Janette said as she smoothed out her dress. "Besides, I thought you were happily married? Quit complaining."

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